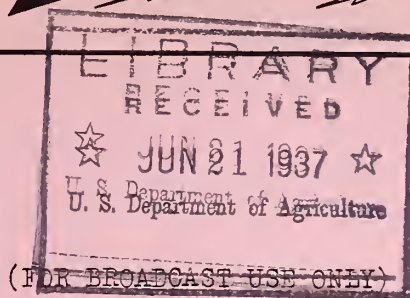


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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, June 15, 1937.

Subject: "MORE CANNING QUESTIONS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Canning questions are coming in on every mail lately, coming so fast that they are keeping Aunt Sammy on the run finding all the answers.

So many listeners have been asking where to find complete, reliable and up-to-date information on home canning that I should like to remind you again of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1762, called "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables and Meats." Here is a helpful guide that any home-canner may have by her side. (Listeners, now and then the poet in me just will out, you see). Right at this moment Department-of-Agriculture shelves are holding plenty of copies of this bulletin, but no telling how long they will be there. So while the free supply lasts write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. for "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables and Meats", Farmers' Bulletin 1762.

A listener who lives in hard-water country wants to know about using hard water in canning. According to Miss Mabel Stienbarger who has made the canning studies at the Bureau of Home Economics and who prepared this bulletin I just mentioned--according to Miss Stienbarger, very hard water may toughen vegetable tissues or make fruit sirups cloudy. But she says that you can partially soften such water by boiling and straining it through several thicknesses of muslin. Or you may allow the boiled water to stand until the fine precipitate settles and then pour off the clear water for use. Water which is only slightly hard will do no harm in canning.

Speaking of the water you use in canning jobs, perhaps I should mention that all water even for washing the food and utensils, for cooking, for making sirup and for cooling tin cans should be pure enough for drinking.

Second canning question: "Please tell me what size jars to use for home canning."

Answer: Pint and quart glass jars are most commonly used for canning while half-pint jars are the ones most often used for fruit preserves, jams, relishes and so on. Sometimes acid fruits and tomatoes are put up in half-gallon jars for large families or for some other large-quantity purpose. But this size is always too large for canning nonacid vegetables and meats. These nonacid foods are the ones that require higher temperatures and longer processing. When packed in containers larger than a quart, the heat penetration is too slow.

Now here is a question about the sweetening for canned fruits. "Can I use honey or maple sirup to put up fruits?" asks a listener.

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The canning investigators find that sirup made with granulated sugar is generally the best sweetening for canned fruits. But they say that sometimes honey or other light-colored sirups can be used for part or even for all the granulated sugar on the basis of measure for measure. However, the results vary when you use these other sirups. The darker, stronger sirups like maple sirup or molasses are not satisfactory for canning because they are likely to disguise the flavor of the fruit and also to darken its color. Even honey of a pronounced flavor such as buckwheat honey may mask the natural fruit flavor. Brown sugar is not satisfactory for canning either because it may carry spoilage bacteria or other impurities.

Here is a letter from a lady who says she has never been satisfied with the berries she has canned. She writes: "I have canned many quarts of blackberries, raspberries and strawberries, but they have never looked or tasted particularly good."

Well, there's just this to consider about berries--many of them are so soft and delicate that they often are more delicious preserved than canned. This is particularly true of strawberries. However, I'll describe to you the best general method for canning blackberries, blueberries, dewberries, huckleberries, Logan blackberries and raspberries. Gather the berries in shallow vessels to prevent crushing them and can them as soon as possible after gathering. And wash them very carefully so as not to crush or soak them. Remove caps and stems, of course, and then sort out the smaller and less perfect berries in the lot to make the juice for the hot sirup that you will pour over the berries. Extract the juice by crushing, heating and straining the berries. Then add sugar to make a medium-sweet sirup.

Because the softer and more delicate berries hold their shape better if packed raw and cold, the canning people advise putting them in raw if you are going to use them for dessert. They do rise to the top of the container after processing but nevertheless they look more attractive when served. On the other hand, if you are putting up berries for pies, where it doesn't matter whether they hold their shape or not, you can precook the berries and pack them hot.

For the raw-pack (or cold-pack), press the raw fruit gently in glass jars or tin cans of sanitary enamel so they will be well filled and then cover with the hot sirup. Glass jars of pint or quart size will need 20 minutes of processing in the hot-water bath. No. 2 or 3 tin cans will need 15 minutes.

For the hot pack, add sugar to the raw berries in the proportion of a fourth to a half pound of sugar to each pound of berries. Sour berries of course, need more sugar than sweet ones. Stir the sugar and berries gently and boil from 3 to 4 minutes. Pack boiling hot and process either glass jars or tin cans 5 minutes in the boiling water bath.

But, listeners, all these details and many others you will find in that home canning bulletin I mentioned. Once more: The name of it is "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables and Meats;" the number is 1762; write for it to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
